

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Where Are The Dead?

(Jerry Fite)

When people die, where do they go? Is their body all that now exists so when we bury or cremate the body, we have buried or cremated them? Or, does the spirit of soul of the person go to a different place than the body? If so, does the inward man go to either Heaven or Hell when the outward man has succumbed to death? We can go to the Bible and find the answer to our questions.

Jesus speaks of a “*certain rich man*” who “*died*” and was “*buried*” (Luke 16:19, 22). Then Jesus says he was in “*Hades*” (Luke 16:23). Our word, “*Hades*” is transliterated from the Greek which referred to the region of “*departed spirits*” and may have derived its meaning from being the realm of the “*unseen*”. We therefore know that there is more to man than just his body, and at death, while the body is buried, the spirit or soul of man departs into the unseen or Hadean world.

Jesus speaks of what happened to a very poor man who died, named Lazarus. When this

beggar died, his soul or spirit was “*carried away by the angels*” into the Hadean realm and received immediate comfort (Luke 16:20, 22).

While Lazarus is comforted, the rich man is having a different experience. He has lifted up his eyes, while in torment, to see Lazarus being comforted in the bosom of Abraham (Luke 16:23). Jesus tells us that there is a “*great gulf*” dividing the rich man from Lazarus. Lazarus could not come from his part of Hades to the rich man to offer any comfort, nor could the rich man escape and forge the great gulf after death to a place of comfort (Luke 16:26).

When Jesus died, his soul also entered Hades, while His body was buried in a tomb (Acts 2:23, 27, John 19:38-42). Near death, Jesus promised one of the men crucified with him: “*Today, shalt thou be with me in Paradise*” (Luke 23:39-43). The word, “*Paradise*” depicts yet another picture of comfort in the realm of Hades as a peaceful “*park*” or “*garden*” for departed souls.

Jesus draws the curtain so we can view what happens to our souls when we die. In Hades, there is a place “*of comfort*” which is divided by a great impassable gulf from those who are “*in torments*”, “*anguish*”, and certain “*flame*” (Luke 16:23-26).

Hades is the place where departed spirits go when separated from the body at death. Heaven and Hell will be the place where the soul and the resurrected body go together into endless eternity (Matthew 10:28, I Corinthians 15:42-58, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:10). Hades will not be emptied till Jesus returns to resurrect the dead and sit in judgment upon all men (Revelation 20:13, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Jesus tells us no one will return from the torments of Hades to warn loved ones, but we have the prophets, the Law of Moses and today, the word of Christ to heed so at death we can enter the place of comfort (Luke 16:27-31). When your loved ones are attending your funeral, which will it be for you in Hades: comfort or torment? Heed God’s word NOW!